

# Just In Case

JEREMIAH BOWE

In April 2005, I began to plan my second trip with **Wes Atkinson Expeditions**. The primary goal of this trip would be to hunt elk and the conversation in my group, (myself, my father, and our good friends and hunting partners, Jeremy Scheel and Doug Vogler), turned to whether or not to also purchase deer tags.....just in case the

by Wes's best guess. He looked like the easiest to approach and after making sure he was going to stay put, a stalk was quickly planned. Wes had me strip down to my polypropylene camouflage long underwear, take his lightweight coat, my rangefinder, and my quiver; and after twenty more minutes of instruction, I was off. The steep, 150-yard walk to the top of



GROSS SCORE: **193** | POINTS: **4X5** | SPREAD: **30** | LOCATION: **EASTERN COLORADO**



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opportunity arose. As the trip neared, it was decision-making time and unlike the rest of my group, I decided to buy one on the off-chance that I might need it.

By the third day of our five-day trip, we had seen some elk but had blown our opportunities and were still empty-handed. Then, as we were leaving the ranch that morning, Wes suddenly stopped the truck. He had spotted three bucks running along a deep gully. They were spooked but they did not go far before bedding tight against the rim of a cliff. The biggest, in full velvet, was 180 inches



the rim took me the better part of fifty minutes. Halfway up I stopped, took off my wool socks, and pulled them on over my boots in order to deaden any noise on the rocky climb. As I reached the edge, my heart was in my throat, knowing that Wes had parked his truck directly in line with the bedded deer and me.

Slowly, I peered over the rim. Careful to keep a mahogany bush in front of me, I spotted the buck just below and facing straight away. WOW! The adrenaline hit me as I was only thirty-six yards away from the buck of a lifetime.

After nearly forty pain-staking, but exciting, minutes the buck stood. As I crouched to draw, he caught some movement and froze. He had been standing facing directly away



Video pictures by Wes Atkinson

from me and as he cranked his neck to determine the source of movement, he became uncomfortable and unbelievably, he turned broadside. I slowly drew my bow behind the mahogany and came over the bush in one motion. However, failing to realize the steepness of the rim, I did not have a shot from my knees. In panic, I stood up completely and I was met immediately by a gust of wind that kept me

from steadying my bow. Knowing that time was running out, I rushed the shot and my arrow hit far back. Blood poured out as he ran down the side of the slope and 150 yards later, he toppled over. Shouts of excitement rang out throughout the canyon. I was totally shaken.

As Wes approached the buck, he could not believe his eyes. "I totally misjudged this buck.

He's 190!" He could not believe the width and mass of this great animal. The four by five brute dressed out at 200 pounds! At 50 inches wide and with over 18 inches of mass on each side - including 6-inch bases - the buck green scored at 193! Needless to say, we will be returning to Atkinson Expeditions next season, and I plan on buying another deer tag.....just in case.

